

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

IN RE THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF A COMMISSION ON  
SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

)  
) ORDER  
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FILED  
APR 25 2000

Pursuant to appointment by the Chief Justice of this Court, in November 1999, the Honorable Jeffrey H. Langton, District Judge; Clerk of District Court Jean Thompson; Montana Legal Services Association Director Neil Haight; and Jim Hunt, Esq., chair of the Commission on Unauthorized Practice, attended a national conference on self-represented litigants appearing in court sponsored by the American Judicature Society. The delegation has conveyed to the Court its unanimous opinion that the issue of self-represented litigants is deserving of ongoing scrutiny and action and that appointment of a Supreme Court commission to deal with this issue is justified and necessary to obtain results.

The Court is well-aware of the large and increasing number of litigants attempting to proceed without the benefit of attorneys in all types of actions in this and other courts. The Court is also cognizant of at least some of the difficulties caused to those and other litigants and to the judicial system in general by this lack of representation. The Court agrees with the above-named delegation members that this issue is deserving of ongoing scrutiny and action, for the benefit of all persons who use the courts of this state.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that a Commission on Self-Represented Litigants is hereby created to recommend an action plan to this Court, consider and recommend court rule and statutory changes, coordinate with existing programs now in place in various Montana locations, develop new pilot programs, and seek grants to fund these activities.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the following individuals, all of whom have been nominated by the delegation, are appointed as the initial members of the Commission, for the terms set forth below:

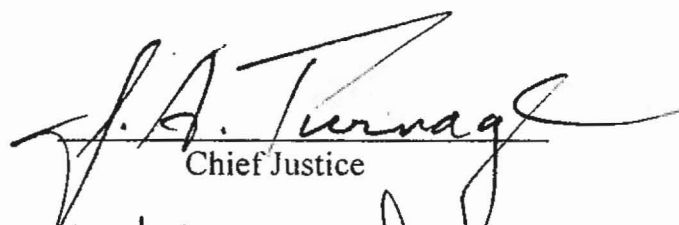
NAME	TERM
Jean Thompson - co-chair	3 years
Hon. Jeffrey H. Langton - co-chair	3 years
Neil Haight	2 years
Jim Hunt	2 years
Judy Williams	1 year
Judy Meadows	1 year

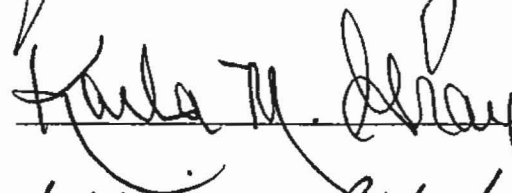
In addition, the Honorable Terry N. Trieweiler and the Honorable Karla M. Gray of this Court have agreed to serve as this Court's liaisons with the Commission.

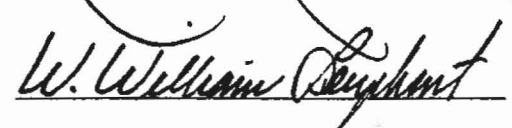
Finally, it appears necessary that this Court seek budget funding for the Commission from the Montana Legislature, which the Court will do. In the event that such funding is not provided, continued service of the appointed members of the Commission shall be optional, as they are not expected to serve and pay for such service from their own funds.

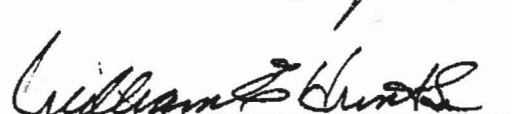
The Clerk is directed to provide copies of this Order to each of the above-named members of the Commission on Self-Represented Litigants, to the State Bar of Montana with the request that it be published in the earliest possible edition of the *Montana Lawyer*, and to the Montana Supreme Court Administrator.

Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2000.

  
 Chief Justice

  
 Karla M. Gray

  
 W. William Langton

  
 William F. Hunt